

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method of determining a prioritized listing of offers for use to contact potential customers, the method comprises:

generating in a computer an ordered listing of offers from a set of offers, by which to contact a potential customer from a group of potential customers by considering the potential customer independently from others of the potential customers in the group, during generating of the ordered listing of offers for the potential customer;

operating on a merged list of offers based upon a budget for contacting the potential customers, with the merged list of offers including offers in the ordered listing of offers for the potential customers in the group of potential customers.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein generating further comprises: eliminating offers that are mutually exclusive from the ordered listing of offers.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the ordered listing of offers is prioritized based on highest expected profit.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein generating comprises: operating on the set of offers for ~~each~~ a member of the group of potential customers.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~if a number of offers exceeds a number N of offers allocated for a potential customer~~, the method further comprises:

producing an alternative ordered listing of offers having N offers if a number of offers exceeds a number N of offers allocated for a potential customer.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein generating the ordered listing of offers is performed independently for each a potential customer in the group of potential customers to produce a list for each potential customer.

7. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method of determining a prioritized number of offers to contact customers from a group of customers, the method comprising:

determining in a computer an ordered set of offers to be sent to each a customer;
operating on a merged list of offers based upon a budget for contacting the potential customers, with the merged list of offers including offers in the ordered listing of offers for the potential customers in the group of potential customers;[[],] and for each a customer:[]

eliminating any offers that are not applicable to the customer based on eligibility rules for the offer or offers for which an expected profit for the customer is below a threshold amount; and

ordering remaining offers by expected profit.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 further comprising:

producing a proposed solution having an ordered listing of N offers where N is the lesser of the total remaining offers and the maximum number of offers allowed for the customer.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8 wherein the proposed solution is represented as a bit string of a length that is equal to the total of the remaining offers.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 wherein the proposed solution is checked against rules of the form (M,S), meaning at most M offers from set S can be sent to a customer.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10 wherein if an (M,S) rule is violated, a list of new alternative proposed solutions is generated by:

determining a number of bits $T > M$ from the set S that indicate offers should be sent in the proposed solution;

generating new alternative proposed solutions, each proposed solution containing new alternative offers, wherein each a new alternative offer is represented in a bit string by setting $T - M$ number of bits that are not a part of the set S, and which immediately follow a rightmost one bit R1 in the proposed solution.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11 further comprising:

generating alternative proposed solutions based on all combinations of the T one bits up to R1 and any zero bits in set S between R1 and R2 containing M one bits.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12 wherein the a new alternative proposed solutions solution are is each merged with any preceding list of proposed solutions.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the list of proposed solutions is checked in decreasing order of profitability.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[13]] 7 further comprising: wherein operating on the merged list of offers further comprises:

accommodating a budget by sorting all offers chosen for all customers the merged list of offers by return on investment; and

truncating the bottom of the merged list of offers.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13 further comprising:

flagging customers who are truncated for each an offer; and

rerunning flagged customers after removing exhausted offers and offers that the flagged customers were already approved for, while lowering their max number of allowed offers.

17. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein truncating occurs at a boundary defined by a constraint on the method.

18. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein truncating is selectable by the user.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 18 wherein truncating occurs based on individual variance of profit from ~~each~~ a customer with customers having low variance being truncated for certain offers before customers having high variance.

20. (Currently Amended) A computer program product residing on a computer readable medium for determining a prioritized number of offers to contact customers from a group of customers, comprises instructions to cause a computer to:

determine an ordered set of offers to be sent to ~~each~~ a customer;
operating on a merged list of offers based upon a budget for contacting the potential customers, with the merged list of offers including offers in the ordered listing of offers for the potential customers in the group of potential customers;[,] and for ~~each~~ a customer;[,]

eliminate any offers that are not applicable to the customer based on eligibility rules for the offer or offers for which an expected profit for the customer is below a threshold amount; and

order remaining offers by expected profit.

21. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 20 further comprising instructions to:

produce a proposed solution having an ordered listing of N offers where N is the lesser of the total remaining offers and the maximum number of offers allowed for the customer.

22. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 20 wherein the proposed solution is represented as a bit string of a length that is equal to the total number of the remaining offers.

23. (Original) The computer program product of claim 20 further comprising instructions to:

check a proposed solution against rules of the form (M,S) meaning at most M offers from set S can be sent to a customer.

24. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 23 wherein if an (M,S) rule is violated,

the computer program product further comprises instructions to:

generate a list of new alternative proposed solutions by instructions that:

determine a number of bits $T > M$ from a set S that indicate offers should be sent in the proposed solution;

generate new alternative proposed solutions, the proposed solutions containing new alternative offers, with the new alternative offers represented in a bit string by setting $T-M$ number of bits that are not a part of the set S, and which immediately follow a rightmost one bit $R1$ in the proposed solution.

25. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 24 further comprising instructions to:

generate alternative proposed solutions based on all combinations of the T one bits up to $R1$ and any zero bits in set S between $R1$ and $R2$ containing M one bits.

26. (Original) The computer program product of claim 25 wherein the new alternative proposed solutions are merged with any preceding list of proposed solutions.

27. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 20 ~~further comprising: wherein operating on the merged list of offers further comprises:~~

~~accommodating a budget by sorting all offers chosen for all customers the merged list of offers by return on investment; and~~
~~truncating the bottom of the merged list of offers.~~

28. (Currently Amended) A system for determining a prioritized number of offers to send to customers from a group of customers, the system comprises:

a computer; and

a computer readable medium storing a computer program product for determining the prioritized number of offers, comprises instructions to cause the computer to:

determine an ordered set of offers to be sent to ~~each a customer;~~

~~operating on a merged list of offers based upon a budget for contacting the potential customers, with the merged list of offers including offers in the ordered listing of offers for the potential customers in the group of potential customers;[], and for each a customer:[]~~

eliminate any offers that are not applicable to the customer based on eligibility rules for the offer or offers for which an expected profit for the customer is below a threshold amount; and

order remaining offers by expected profit.

29. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 28 wherein the proposed solution is represented as a bit string of a length that is equal to the total number of the remaining offers.

30. (Original) The system of claim 28 wherein the proposed solution is checked against rules of the form (M,S) meaning at most M offers from set S can be sent to a customer.

31. (New) The system of claim 28 wherein operating on the merged list of offers further comprises:

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sorting the merged list of offers by return on investment; and
truncating the bottom of the merged list of offers.